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Dear Friend:

The past summer's fight to save Ellsworth Air Force Base from closure was a great victory for our national defense and the people of South Dakota. As a result of this successful bipartisan effort, and our ongoing work to bring new missions to the base, we will continue to enjoy the military and economic benefits of the base's presence for a long time to come.

I viewed the Ellsworth battle not only as a demonstration of what South Dakota can achieve when we set aside political differences and work together, but also as an economic wake-up call for our state. For several dark days in the summer, we stood face-to-face with the prospect of losing our second-largest employer, which accounts for \$278 million in economic activity per year. To me, this experience highlighted more clearly than ever the need for additional initiatives designed to accelerate the growth and diversification of South Dakota's economy.

Though we are now in a position to celebrate Ellsworth's continuing presence in the state, I believe it would be a terrible mistake to rest on our economic laurels. Instead, we should not only press ahead with worthwhile existing economic development initiatives – we should *redouble* our efforts to expand the economic opportunities available to the hard-working citizens of South Dakota.

As a member of the U.S. Senate Budget Committee and the Appropriations Committee, I am in a good position to support economic development in South Dakota, and economic development has long been a personal priority of mine. By helping to pass the recent energy bill and highway bill, for example, I was able to make a contribution to the efforts of so many others who are working to strengthen South Dakota's economy. Similarly, a \$10 million grant that I secured in 2001 will be combined with funds recently appropriated by the state legislature to establish an underground laboratory at the Homestake mine.

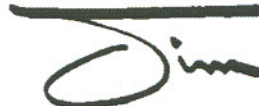
I write today to ask for your help in generating new ideas about how we can build on our recent economic successes and propel our state to a new level of prosperity. While I have several thoughts about how to do this, I would also like to benefit from the experience of experts like you. I hope you'll be able to spare just a few short minutes of your time to return the brief survey that follows this letter. Feel free to share the web address with others who may be interested in sharing their views.

Because we are likely to face extremely tight budgetary constraints for the foreseeable future, we need to be realistic about the difficulty of mobilizing large quantities of

additional federal funding for whatever new ideas we come up with. But I am confident that there is plenty we can do within current budgetary constraints to boost South Dakota's prosperity.

I look forward to learning about what you regard as economic priorities for South Dakota, and how we might achieve them. By continuing to work together, I know that we can transform a renewed emphasis on economic development into new economic results! Thank you for your help and continued support.

Sincerely,



Tim Johnson

TPJ/mdv

## Share Your Economic Development Expertise with U.S. Senator Tim Johnson

The prospect of losing Ellsworth Air Force Base made clear the need for a *renewed commitment* to strengthening and diversifying our state's economy. Please take a moment to share your thoughts on how we can build upon our past economic accomplishments in order to boost South Dakota's prosperity.

In your opinion, what are the highest economic development priorities for South Dakota and/or for your local area? For example, should we focus on providing assistance to start-up businesses, enhancing the skills of our workforce, improving access to affordable financing, placing a greater emphasis on promoting specific economic sectors, etc.?  
(Feel free to use additional paper to answer this and all other questions.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

If you could change one thing about existing economic development policies and initiatives, what would it be? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you perceive to be the greatest threats to South Dakota's economic well-being?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Are we failing to capitalize on untapped opportunities for economic development, and if so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

Given current budgetary constraints at all levels of government, how can we capitalize on these opportunities in a fiscally responsible way?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:

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or reply online at [http://johnson.senate.gov/ecodev\\_survey.cfm](http://johnson.senate.gov/ecodev_survey.cfm)

Thanks!